

First Quarter Regional Research Meeting: Northern Region, Ghana

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Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three regional projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads the program’s monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. <http://africa-rising.net/>

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# Background

Africa RISING project in Ghana is a USAID government funded project led by International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). It is a research project into sustainable intensification and integration of natural resources to improve productivity, nutrition, income security and reducing hunger and poverty in smallholder families especially children and women. The project is being implemented in the three northern regions of Ghana (Northern, Upper East and Upper West). In Northern Region the project is implemented in two districts, namely Tolon and Savelugu Districts. In Savelugu District, the project is implemented in five communities (Jana, Duko, Botingli, Tibali and Kpallung).

# Regional Research Meetings

Africa RISING project Ghana organizes quarterly regional research meetings in the 3 northern regions. The objective of the meetings is to provide a platform for interaction among work research theme leaders, FBOs and other partners to foster integrated approach for implementing project activities.

# Highlights of Regional Research meeting

The meeting was held on 23rd June, 2015 at Modern City Hotel in Tamale, Ghana. Participants included; research theme leaders, FBO members from all intervention communities, District Directors of Agriculture, Research for Development (R4D) platform members and District nutrition officers.

## Meeting objectives and expected outcomes

The key objective of this meeting is to provide a niche for interaction among research theme leaders and partners to foster collaborative approach in planning and implementing project activities. Specific objectives of the regional research meeting were to present:

1. Progress of implementation of project activities;
2. Challenges affecting implementation of project activities;
3. Plan activities for the next quarter.

The expected outcomes of the meeting were to:

1. Deliver progress report for implementation of project activities
2. Identify challenges affecting implementation of project and possible solutions.
3. Propose activities for the next quater.

## Meeting process

The meeting was chaired by the Savelugu Municipal Director of Agriculture, Mr. Francis Neindow. The meeting started at exactly 9: 00 am with self-introduction of all the participants.

# Welcome address by Regional Co-coordinator

Mr Abdul Rahman (Northern regional coordinator for Africa RISING) welcomed all participants to the meeting, adding that participants should take good advantage of this meeting by tapping into potential areas of interest for strong integration in implementing project activities. He therefore charged all participants to give-out their best in terms of presentation and discussions to make the meeting a successful one.

# Improving cereal-legume cropping system trials in Northern Region

Mr. Abdul Rahman Nurudeen after the welcome address gave a presentation on the background of the projects and results of 2014 season cereal-legume cropping system trials. According to him, the objective of AR is to support smallholder farmers to eradicate poverty and hunger through improved cropping systems, household income security as well as conserving the natural resources. The project operates in the three (3) sub-regions of Africa (West Africa, Southern and Eastern Africa and Ethiopian highlands). In West Africa, the project operates in Ghana and Mali. In Ghana, it operates in the three (3) Northern regions with two (2) districts in each region and a total of twenty five (25) intervention communities in all the regions. He also outlined activities carried out from January 2015 to June 2015 (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of activities carried out from January-June 2015.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Activity** | **Period** |
| 1 | Data entry and cleaning | January |
| 2 | Data cleaning, and biometric and data management training workshop | February |
| 3 | Data analysis, report writing and West Africa annual planning and review meeting | March |
| 4 | Packaging of inputs for 2015 cropping season experiments and installation of the weather station logger | April |
| 5 | Training of AEAs on experimental protocols and distribution of inputs | May |
| 6 | Ploughing of experimental fields, field layout and establishment of nursery | June |

The Research Associate also presented the results obtained from the experimental fields in the last 2014 cropping season. In his presentation, he made it clear that results from 2014 season show that the use of high N rate (90 kg/ha) had significant increase in grain and stover yields. TZEE QPM CO cultivar recorded the highest grain yield but was not significantly different from the yields of DTSRWCOF2, Omankwa and Obatanpa cultivars. He also added that since TZEE QPM CO and DTSRWCOF2 are not released cultivars the use of Omankwa cultivar may be more suitable for maize production in the Northern Region. He again mentioned that the use of three spraying regime for cowpea pest control resulted in significant increase in grain yield. On the effect of integrated soil fertility management (ISFM) on soya bean, triple super phosphate (TSP) plus fertisoil according to him significantly increased both grain and fodder yields of soybean.

He added that a number of challenges confront the research team in the implementation of activities including:

1. Limited resources
2. Erratic rainfall pattern

He concluded his presentation on the plan of activities for the next quarter as follows:

1. Field layout
2. Planting
3. Agronomic practices
4. Training of farmers on good agronomic practices (GAP)

# Socioeconomic studies on profitability of Africa RISING technologies

Dr. Bekele Kotu, the team leader for the socio-economic studies illustrated the activities that have been implemented in the past three months. According to him, a study that was aimed at assessing the profitability of agricultural technologies was undertaken. He added that the study addressed the following research questions: Whether the technologies were better than the base technologies? How profitable the technologies were? He said a total of 102 technologies under trial in Ghana, out of these; twenty-three of them were base technologies (farmer practice) and the remaining are new trials. He indicated that the preliminary results based on 1701 data points and one or two years data show that most of the AR technologies have comparable profitability as the base technology. He mentioned caution should be exercised when interpreting the data since the base technologies are also sometimes promoted technologies. He said that profitability of the technologies are more sensitive to output price changes than input price changes or wage.

Mr. Frimpong also presented the proposal for the upcoming socio-economic research. In his presentation on Socioeconomic Study of the Adoption of AR technologies, Mr Frimpong pointed out that the study is aimed at exploring the adoption path and challenges of adoption. Thus, the study according to Mr. Frimpong will show among other things the challenges of adoption, what needs to be changed or added to improve adoption as well as effects of adoption of the technologies on adopter’ livelihood. He also mentioned that the study will be conducted in 16 of AR communities, and both participants of the trials and non-participants will be interviewed.

# Improving diverse diets and nutrition through agricultural interventions and behavioral change communication

Dr Mahama Saaka, a nutritionist and lecture at University for Development Studies, mentioned that to achieve optimal nutrition and healthy diets for the poor, agriculture, nutrition and public health interventions will need to be implemented together. Africa RISING in collaboration with University for development studies plan to evaluate impact of linking the production and consumption of locally available micronutrient-rich foods with public health behaviour change communication (BCC) strategies on dietary diversity and nutritional status. The study tends to use the following approach:

1. A cluster non-randomized controlled trial was to be used in collecting quantitative data from mother/child pairs.
2. Households with moderate to severe malnourished children aged 6-23 months was to be selected from 25 Africa RISING intervention communities and will be randomly assigned to one of two treatments.
3. Treatments:
4. Legumes, Vegetables and Livestock + BCC delivered through community Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP);
5. Legumes, Vegetables and Livestock + BCC delivered through Positive Deviance (PD) approach.

Report on Savelugu MoFA activities

Mr. Francis Neindow (Savelugu Director of Agriculture) mentioned that Savelugu MoFA has undertaken the following activities between January to June:

1. Farmer sensitization meetings;
2. Organizing meeting between community FBOs and district R4D;
3. Receiving and sharing of seed packages to farmers.

He also added that a total of one hundred and sixty-five farmers attended the farmer sensitization meetings (Tabel 2), one hundred and fourty-seven (147) attended FBO and district R4D meetings (Table 3), ninety (90) seed packages for up-scaling trials and ninety-four (94) seed packages for baby trials has been received and distributed.

Challenges:

1. Delayed rains and rainfall not enough for ploughing and planting.
2. During the sensitization meetings all farmers wanted up-scaling demos instead of baby demos.

Table 2. List of farmers at community sensitization meetings

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Community | Male | Female | Total |
| 1. | Duko | 18 | 11 | 29 |
| 2. | Jana | 17 | 8 | 25 |
| 3. | Botingli | 21 | 10 | 31 |
| 4. | Kpalung | 27 | 14 | 41 |
| 5. | Tibali | 25 | 14 | 39 |
| Grand Total | | 108 | 57 | 165 |

Table 3. List of farmers at FBOs and District R4D meetings

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Community | Male | Female | Total |
| 1. | Duko | 15 | 8 | 23 |
| 2. | Jana | 21 | 9 | 39 |
| 3. | Botingli | 17 | 8 | 25 |
| 4. | Kpalung | 25 | 10 | 35 |
| 5. | Tibali | 22 | 12 | 34 |
| Grand Total | | 100 | 47 | 147 |

Report on Tolon MoFA activities

Mr. Iddrisu Musah (Kumbungu Director of Agriculture) presented on behalf of Tolon MoFA. He mentioned activities carried out by Tolon MoFA from January to June as:

1. Farmer sensitization meetings;
2. Receiving of seed packages to farmers;
3. Distribution of seed packages to farmers.

According to him, two hundred and three (203) farmers attended the farmer sensitization meetings across the five communities in the district (Table 4). One hundred and twenty-four (124) seed packages for up-scaling demos has been received and distributed to farmers (Table 5). And one hundred and sixty-three seed packages for baby trial demos has been received and distributed to farmers (Table 5).

Plant of activities for the next quarter:

1. Demarcation of trial demos;
2. Planting of trial demos;
3. Teaching of good agronomic practices;
4. Supervision of demo fields.

Table 4. List of farmers at community sensitization meetings

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S/N | Community | Male | Female | Total |
| 1 | Gbanjong | 26 | 4 | 30 |
| 2 | Tingoli | 42 | 7 | 49 |
| 3 | Tibognayili | 25 | 10 | 35 |
| 4 | Kprim | 32 | 8 | 40 |
| 5 | Cheyohi | 43 | 6 | 49 |
|  | Total | 168 | 35 | 203 |

Table 5. 2015 season seed packages received for distribution to farmers

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Trials | Tolon | Kumbungu | Total |
| MAIZE BABY | 41 | 26 | 67 |
| COWPEA BABY | 25 | 22 | 47 |
| SOYABEAN BABY | 29 | 20 | 49 |
| UP-SCALLING | 61 | 63 | 124 |
| Total | 156 | 131 | 287 |

# Report on Savelugu R4D activities

Mr. Mohammed A Sharrif (R4D secretary) presented on behalf of Savelegu R4D on the activities they carried out:

1. Meetings

2. Field visit to Africa RISING communities

He said, Savelugu R4D held their first meeting in February to schedule months for quarterly meetings, draft constitution for the R4D, opening of bank account and field visit to familiarize themselves with what is happing in the communities. He added that the R4D has successfully opened a bank account with Agricultural Development bank in the district with the following details (account name: Savelugu-Nanton Municipal assembly R4D, account number 8111000112712401). Some concerns raised by farmers during their field visit also included:

1. Baby trial plots should be increased;
2. Research activity on small ruminant production.

Challenges:

1. Difficulties in getting all members to attend meetings.
2. Limited resources in carry out some operations.

Plant activities for the next quarter:

1. Prepare report for first quarter meeting and field visit;
2. Organize second quarter meeting;
3. Organize field visit to communities;
4. Collaborate with other stakeholders within the municipality.

# Report on Tolon R4D activities

Mr. Alhassan Adam (R4D chairperson) presented on behalf of Tolon R4D activities:

1. Meetings
2. Field visit to Africa RISING communities

According to him, the R4D met to draft constitution for the R4D, plan periods for quarterly meetings, opening of bank account. He also added that the R4D has opened a bank account with Group Nduom bank in the district with the following details (account name: Tolon R4D, account number 4017122000878).

Challenges:

1. Tolon R4D is yet to get support from African Rising.
2. Difficulties in getting some members to attend to meetings and other activities.

Plant activities for the next quarter:

1. Organize second quarter meeting;
2. Organize field visit to communities.

# Closing remarks

The chairman of the meeting (Mr. Francis Abdulai Neindow ) thanked all participants for making the regional research meeting successful and tasked all activity leaders to follow their plan activities strictly to ensure smooth implementation of the AR project.

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# Annexes

**Annex 1:** List of Participants at 1st quarter regional research meeting

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Participants** | **Title** | **Institution** |
| 1 | Inusah Adam | Contact person Cheyohi No. 2 | Cheyohi No. 2 |
| 2 | Issah Mohammed Sani | Contact Person Duko | Duko |
| 3 | Abukari Abdul-Nasir | Contact Person Gbanjong | Gbanjong |
| 4 | Amadu Issah | Contact Person Jana | Jena |
| 5 | Nassam Mohammed | Contact Person Kpallung | Kpallung |
| 6 | Amadu Adam | Contact Person Kprim | Kprim |
| 7 | Alhassan Fuseini | Contact Person Tibogunayili | Tigogunayili |
| 8 | Fuseini A. Majeed | Contact person Tingoli | Tingoli |
| 9 | Francis A. Neindow | Director | Dept. of Agric. Savelugu |
| 10 | Iddrisu Musah | Director | Dept. of Agric. Kumbungu |
| 11 | Iddrisu Baba Mohammed | Extension Officer | Extension Officer |
| 12 | Cynthia K. Nagal | WIAD Officer | Dept. of Agric. Kumbungu |
| 13 | Amidatu Adam | WIAD Officer | Dept. of Agric.Tolon |
| 14 | Fauzia Sadick | WIAD Officer | Dept. of Agric. Savelugu |
| 15 | Mbah Sylverline | Extension Officer | Dept. of Agric. Tolon |
| 16 | Mavis Korah | GHS R4D Representative | Ghana Health Service |
| 17 | Terry Ansah | Lecturer | UDS |
| 18 | Dr. Mahama Saaka | Lecturer | UDS |
| 19 | Goodman Sarfo K. | PHD Student | IITA |
| 20 | Issahaku Zakaria | Agric Business Advisor | SNV |
| 21 | Adam Alhassan | R4D Chairperson | Tolon |
| 22 | Mohammed A. Sherrif | R4D Secretary | Savelugu |
| 23 | Abdul Rahman Nurudeen | Research Associate | IITA |
| 24 | Stephen Frimpong | Research Associate | IITA |
| 25 | Dr. Bekele Kotu | Research Coordinator | IITA |
| 26 | Mohammed Amisu | Research Supervisor | IITA |
| 27 | Ebenezer Nartey | Research Supervisor | IITA |
| 28 | Nancy Adobea Addo | Research Supervisor | IITA |
| 29 | Dokurugu Fuseini | Research Technician | IITA |